

While a student, he joined the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and I am proud to call him a brother.

Immediately after graduating in 1972, Dr. Wilson was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served on active duty for two years before joining the Reserves. He rose to the rank of Major and served as Personnel Officer of his battalion. His military service lasted a total of 15 years, and provided him significant opportunities to travel and learn from people with different backgrounds and experiences.

Following his active duty military service, Dr. Wilson returned to his high school to teach science and agriculture. At the same time, he used the GI Bill to earn a master's degree in agriculture from Clemson University. While teaching, he became interested in school leadership, and began studying for an Ed.S. in School Administration at Winthrop University. He later transferred to South Carolina State University, where he completed an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership in 2001.

In addition to beginning his career as a teacher at his alma mater, Dr. Wilson served in the administrations of Winnsboro/Fairfield Central High School, Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School, Newberry High School, W.J. Keenan High School, and Richland School District One. Today, he serves as Superintendent for Calhoun County Public Schools, from which he is retiring after eleven years of service.

His accomplishments include being named the first Black principal of Newberry High School where he served for six years and oversaw the school's strong academic performance. While serving as principal of Keenan High School, Dr. Wilson was named South Carolina Principal of the Year in 2003. He oversaw the school becoming the first Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) School in the district while partnering with the University of South Carolina's Engineering School. Keenan High School was also named a Palmetto's Finest High School for the State of South Carolina, and the school, which serves a disadvantaged population, made school history with 15 Black students attaining a 100 percent pass rate on the AP Math exam.

In 2010, he became Superintendent of the Calhoun County School District, which was rated At Risk on the District's Report Card. Within two years, he led the district to an Excellent rating. He oversaw the district's purchase of digital devices for every student from 3rd through 12th grades, and was named South Carolina Superintendent of the Year in 2017 for his accomplishments.

During his career, Dr. Wilson served on various committees including the Executive Committee of the South Carolina High School League, the Education Oversight Committee, and the State's Summer Leadership Conference Committee. He also received the Governor's Order of the Silver Crescent in 2004 and was named an outstanding graduate from the School of Leadership at South Carolina State University the same year. This year, Dr. Wilson was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.

Dr. Wilson is married to his high school sweetheart, Teresa Hendrix Wilson, who also taught high school students for thirty years. They have two children, Teresa and Steven, and three granddaughters.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in celebrating the tremendous work of Dr. Wilson. He exemplifies a commitment to service and a champion of education. His example has been a beacon for many students that have had the opportunity of learning in classrooms, schools, and districts under his leadership. Dr. Wilson's reach is immeasurable, and I wish him all the best as he embarks on the retirement he so richly deserves.

DANIEL CHASE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Daniel Chase, Chief of Staff at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) for his dedication and service to the people of the State of Colorado. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Daniel went above and beyond to engage, educate and inform the community about unemployment benefits, including by participating in many Telephone Town Halls with my office and thousands of my constituents.

Under Governor Hickenlooper's office, Daniel served as a Citizen's Advocate and then was brought on by CDLE as a Special Assistant to the Executive Director. In his time at the department, he has held many roles and now serves as the Chief of Staff in the Executive Director's office. During our Telephone Town Halls, Daniel provided timely updates and answered constituent questions about unemployment benefit programs related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Colorado.

It is because of local heroes like Daniel that our state has been able to support individuals and families during this unprecedented time. I thank Daniel Chase for his service and sacrifice during this difficult time, and I look forward to continuing to work with him as we work to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF SEAMAN SECOND CLASS
CHARLES LOUIS "SONNY BOY"
SAUNDERS

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Navy Seaman Second Class Charles Louis "Sonny Boy" Saunders of Winnie, Texas. Seaman Saunders was serving aboard the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37) on the morning of December 7, 1941. Tragically, the *Oklahoma* sustained 429 casualties during the attack on Pearl Harbor, claiming Mr. Saunders' life. After eight decades, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has identified Seaman Saunders' remains. This year, he will be reinterred in his hometown on the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Saunders was born to Mortimer Alvin and Melina Falke Saunders on October 16, 1923; He was the sixth child and one of four

boys. His oldest brother, Adam, passed away at just 13 months. He grew up with his sisters Lillie Mae, Mary Alice, Sadie Lee, and Anna Belle along with brothers Sidney "Buddy" Edward and Mortimer Virgil.

The Great Depression led to difficult times as his father worked in construction and labored in rice fields to provide for his family, while his mother cared for the home and raised their children. Mr. Saunders' younger sister, Anna Belle, always spoke of her brother's compassion, and how he sacrificed so she could have shoes for her daily walk to school. He could not bear to see his little sister struggle in any manner.

His kind, caring, and playful nature fueled his ambition to serve our nation. On November 23, 1940, one month after his 17th birthday, he joined the U.S. Navy. Not only did he possess a deep desire to defend our country, but he also had great determination to make a better life for his parents and siblings.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft launched an attack on the American fleet of battleships moored at Pearl Harbor, thrusting the United States into the Second World War. After Seaman Saunders' warship capsized because of damage from multiple Japanese torpedoes, his whereabouts were unknown. According to a casualty roster of the *Oklahoma* compiled two weeks after the attack, Seaman Saunders' status was labeled as "missing" but later amended to "killed in action."

Those who perished aboard the USS *Oklahoma* were buried at two different cemeteries: the Halawa and Nu'uuanu Naval Cemeteries in Hawaii. Most of the remains were recovered during salvage operations but were unable to be identified before their interment, and therefore, they were buried as "unknowns."

In recognition of his service, Seaman Saunders was awarded a Purple Heart for military merit and three ribbons for American Defense, American Campaign, and the Asiatic Pacific Campaign. However, these awards seemed to be a lost memory uncovered after family members found his commendations carefully tucked away in a box left inside his mother's old sewing machine.

As the last living sibling, Anna Belle was committed to bringing her brother home and laying him to rest at the gravesite their parents prepared for him years ago at Fairview Cemetery in Winnie, Texas. In 2015, the DPAA was given authority to exhume the unknown remains of the servicemen associated with the USS *Oklahoma* and to reexamine them using advanced forensic technology. It was at this point that the military contacted Anna Belle. She worked tirelessly to gather and provide DNA of family members to help identify her brother's remains.

Unfortunately, she passed away on July 19, 2019, but never lost hope that her brother would one day return home. She prayed her unwavering mission would be continued by those who survived her, and it was. On February 11, 2021, the Saunders family received word that their long-lost relative had finally been found and identified.

Madam Speaker, Seaman Second Class Charles "Sonny Boy" Saunders' arrival in Winnie, Texas, will be welcomed by many relatives, friends, and fellow patriots. On the 80th anniversary of his passing, Mr. Saunders will be buried alongside his parents with full military honors. May God continue to bless this family for their long record of service and sacrifice to our great nation.